

'I Am' movement. Here again, the assets are in excess of three million dollars—and this specifically from the sale of literature and 'love' offerings. The 'love' part is easily explained as 'I Am' is strictly one of those cults indulging in sexual responses. In this sense, 'I Am' can be compared with Aimee McPherson's cult as, contrary to Foursquare Gospel teaching today, Aimee did encourage the physical as she administered to the spiritual.

With huge assets, it is no wonder then that certain of the cults exercise tremendous influence and direct power over the State and city administrations. Money is always power, and cultists know precisely how to wield theirs for their greatest benefits.

CHILDREN OF SATAN

As the slowly-grinding wheels of Californian justice turn, the big questions remained almost totally ignored. Charles Manson's 'Family' are not all guilty of murder. Admittedly, it seems hard to believe that any member of the group was ignorant of the murder-spree. This was a commune living, supposedly, in complete harmony. If all that has been said in defence of 'The Family' by former and still-members then it must surely mean that those not directly charged with actual murder should be named as accessories, before and after, the act.

Lynne Fromme, a 21-year-old redhead, was one of

Manson's 'Family'. She, however, was not detained by the police after the Death Valley raid which broke the back of the alleged murder-gang. As a latecomer to the cult, she only spoke about her own feelings and how they all 'gave up everything for a little peace of mind'.

Basically, Lynne Fromme's story was: there was not a religion or sect but they did live together in spirit and naked beauty. They were a fluctuating, undefinable bunch and sex was unimportant. (This is quite contradictory when compared to other 'Family' confessions of what went on under the stars.)

Again, according to this girl's story: "The desert was a release of love, accepting as much as one needed to pour into it. The people in it were the same. Without push or pull, existence was like being a wide-eyed child, the sun and wind doing the lovemaking."

(Daily Mirror, December 7, 1969.)

Only when one has actually spent days, and even weeks, in the Mojave Desert can one appreciate these comments. There is something strangely compelling about the traceries, expanses of sand and the plant life growing there. It isn't as sandy in the Mojave as in those Foreign Legion films showing the Sahara wastes. There is always something ahead, behind, on either bank that helps mitigate the dreary miles of barren country. And, in the morning (as with Arizona's Painted Desert), when the new sun rises and floods the desert with its warm rays, there are the ghoulish teabowl shapes seemingly bursting forth in wondrous radiance. The desert has magic for those unafraid of

being alone, or cut-off from immediate civilization. It has its terrors but so, then, does city life. One could compare a snake with an automobile. Or a falling piece of masonry with an ant hill. In the city, a car won't hit you if caution is observed. The same applies for a snake. It won't strike if there's nobody annoy ing it or standing in its path. The desert demands, caution, and respect. It is not unjust nor does it seek to destroy. Possibly, the best description would be the desert is different from what most people are used to and requires more imagination and appreciation to find its true beauty.

If all we hear is true, then The Family were wise to retreat into the desert after their murderous foray. At least there the sins could be washed away in solitude.

Taking another viewpoint, Manson and his cult were like to the desert. The barrenness of their lives expressed itself perfectly amid the scrub and sand. The small flowers of 'love' they tried to sow within themselves were the morning blossoms, the early seed ing growths. The hatred for affluence and the murder lust could find similarities in the Mojave. The desert haters, too. It loathes advancing civilization, preferring to remain idly aloof, devoid of contact. The lust for death does not find itself manifested too often in the desert but, because of climatic conditions, death is always a prospect through carelessness.

Rather surprisingly, the Manson girls find nothing reprehensible in their avowed surrender to the rules of The Family. Sex seems to be of no consequence to

now. It happened, it happens—so what? Somewhere along the line, these girls appear to have lost that vital spark of respect for their own person that sets the prostitute apart from her office-girl sister. Nobody would attempt to moralise these days. Permissiveness has reached such a stage that it would be folly to pontificate on the virtues of virginity. Even having children out of wedlock is regarded as 'in' with many famous theatrical families and top socialites. Bastardy is no longer the 'shameful' thing it was although the great majority of decent, ordinary people will agree that something needs to be done to curb the trend away from legalised marriage.

No matter what the 'Family' say—a girl is without respect when she submits to any man wishing to profess his love through a purely physical act. Committing may have a place in our society but surely these young girls are quite wrong when they claim that they all loved nature and, therefore, found beauty in it and lovemaking. Be it the wind, sun or velvet night-sky, these are nature's children. The result of copulation as we found the instruments of God's benevolence beautiful are children—human children. And claims that the children were given more attention for removed from the cities is at variance, again, with what we know to be fact.

Will those bearing even slight responsibility for The Family's existence ever admit to feeling guilty? There is the Scientology movement. Will it confirm that Manson got his start with them? Will The Process (Mind Benders) ponder over claims that their cult con-

tributed a little to hippiedom's most famous clan?

Already, a spokesman for the London branch of The Process has rejected any connection with his cult and Manson. Nobody said the connection existed between London and The Family. All that was said was that Manson might have been influenced by them.

From past experience of cult related to adverse claims, The Process kept right in step with bisexy. Dray fast is a damned good motto in evidence.

When the Family shall stand trial depends on the lawyers and the American courts. However, once the trial does commence, the lawmakers should watch and listen avidly. Much is at stake. Society, as we know it, is on trial in Los Angeles. The society that permitted such depraved 'monsters' to run free. The society that does not prosecute with determination those who dabble in narcotics. Fines, no matter how large, are not a deterrent. And, anyway, the largest fines are usually levied on 'pop' stars who can well afford a thousand or two to stay in circulation. One week and the fine has been recovered from the society they show. The laws exist to deal with every offence these people commit. Why aren't those same laws being applied? And more especially, when the guilty face their judges, why aren't they treated as criminals instead of *'crying children'*? Youth demands equality to vote and make important decisions. Let them then stand on their two feet when it also comes to punishment and not cry 'innocent', or 'foolish pranks'.

It is a safe bet, knowing American law and the mouthiness of legal representatives there, that we shall

be bombarded with pathetic tales of broken bones and displaced joyances. It is odds on that the defence will claim each and every one of the Family innocent of the major crimes. That is part of defending. We should have quite a treat in store reading about those wicked lass and the "pigs" whose affluence destroyed Murkin's career.

However, this is conjecture. One may only hope that something constructive erupts from the trial and that another book shall be written faithfully recording every word of the case. Only then will the world public see the damage permissiveness can bring; the agony and despair that drug-addicted 'slaves' leave in their tormented wake.

THE DEVIL RIDES

SEARCHING through clippings and reports of Charles Manson, one fact stands out very strongly—this man 'discovered' himself whilst languishing in jail. This is entirely possible. Jail is not a place where a man is forced to spend the major part of his day engaged in hard work. It is a place of supposed correction but very little is done for a man behind those forbidding bars. An occasional visit from a chaplain, church 'parade' on a Sunday, Mass every morning if one is a Roman Catholic and insists on that remaining 'loyal'.

and, if fortunate, as time draws close for release, a social worker to make a hurried notation in a book. For the rest, the dull routine of languishing in a cell without a view or spending fruitless hours in a 'relaxation room'.

Manson had paid debts to society before. He was a habitual criminal in a sense. Doing a stretch meant absolutely nothing to him. Not as a shame, nor as a frustration, nor even as a punishment. Years ago, in California, there were men who deliberately got themselves arrested at a certain time of the year to avoid the responsibilities of 'outside' life and to have what they called 'a rest-up'. In other areas, where it rained and snowed during the whole winter, men went 'inside' for comfort and shelter. Unlike in Britain, America's nomadic population does not consider jail a strong deterrent. It has been said that nearly sixty percent of American males have been in a jail for something or other. And it's relatively easy to get locked-up in most States. Drunkenness, driving offences, jay-walking (even failure to produce satisfactory identification when asked by a police officer, buying bootleg liquor or selling it, these are but a few of the simple 'arrests'). In certain towns, the police hold 'drives' to rid themselves of undesirable characters. 'Floaters' are issued—sentences suspended providing the accused guarantees to leave town for a minimum period. In other regions, when the prison farms require additional labour, the police are given strict instructions to crack-down hard. And in Los Angeles, judges have been known to hand out sentences relat-

ing in the crop-harvesting requirements instead of seeking the punishment fit the crime.

It is remarkable how word gets around in Skid Row in Los Angeles. One night the streets are littered with drunks and police cars swing past uncaringly. The next, the streets are empty and the fuzz prowl searching for drunks to arrest. The grapevine has scented the harvest and taken its precautions.

In such a society, a man like Manson would not stand out. In jail, he would be a number or, in a few known buddies, 'Charlie'. He was not a distinguished criminal and therefore would not receive preferential treatment. His mind, if inclined to activity and learning, would have ample opportunity to consume facts. And, considering how simple it is for a non-criminal type to end up in a jail, it is very possible that Manson was sharing a cell with a Scientologist on a single drunk charge.

The barren emptiness of a prison, the dreariness of a cell, the soulless routine—and time to listen and digest . . .

Mostly, in jail, they talk about women and crime. Manson would appear to be afflicted with a supercharged sex-drive. He would think of women, talk about women, imagine how it would be when he gained his freedom again. But he would also think about crime, too. There are always those 'inmates' willing to pass along tips on how to avoid the pitfalls most 'amateurs' make. Manson was not an amateur but neither was he a professional success. He would listen to the tips and discuss bigger-paying crimes.

And, if we assume correctly, the thoughts of Scientology would mingle with his other ideas and dreams. At night, when silence was demanded, and a man would lie on his back and gaze at a bare, dark ceiling, those thoughts would become distorted and the dream-world fuse, meld . . . until reality was lost and sleep came softly to claim its prize.

Once released, a man like Manson would try to reassert himself. He belonged to crime; therefore crime was the solution to a money problem. It wouldn't matter that freedom could be a few hours, a month at most. There was always the chance it would pay off in spades and go undetected.

Where Manson got his occult background is unknown. Mingling, as he did, with the San Francisco Hippies would have brought him into contact with a variety of weird and wonderful cults and beliefs. The Haight-Ashbury district abounded with fascinating intellectuals. That was when they came to visit and stayed to partake. No longer. The "junk" drove it all away. Junk and murder and savage beatings. But before the exodus, Manson could easily have studied witchcraft at the doctored feet of a 'master teacher'. They had little else to do in 'Frisco then. Tourists lashed out money for the dubious privilege of watching couples walk by with Indian beads swinging and a baby carried papoose-style over a narrow, rounded back. Drugs cost less than today. The crackdown along the Mexican border cut the hippie traffic to the bone and forced the drop-outs to depend on Mafia high-price supplies.

And so, little by little, the grand idea grew. The rest

was nature in Haight-Ashbury. Groups formed, clung to one another in tribal copulation. When the exodus began, the Family departed, too. And 'murder' was turned loose on the highways of Southern California.

GO WEST—GET LOST

Nobody knew who started circulating the call. It came—and the tribes heard. That was enough.

This was one "broadcast" the squares couldn't blame on the massive communications media. They hadn't had a Press hand-out. Nobody had. Just word-of-mouth and "did you know they've got a happening going in Ventura?".

The square world condemned them in its sickness, yet what right did it have to interfere? The up-right people of the outside blaming all the 'loose' for the Tate slayings . . . why, they were the ones killing and looting and burning for the sake of 'things', in the name of words!

The canyon was a psychedelic wonderland. Tribes arrived in their fancy gear shouting "Love!" and "Peace!" Down near the box-end of the canyon a primitive had been erected and a group blazed the surrounding hills with their music. It was fantastic.

Here and there, Tribes in Indian getup squared patiently before their tents with displays of jewellery laid out on the ground. Others offered oranges picked that morning from a grove some just wandered

around with the smiling peace of a trip building inside them. Flower-decorated bus. sand-buggy, converted Greyhound resplendent in way-out designs, all transportation, all parked at crazy angles to the canyon. And, here and there, uncaring of the spectators, a copulation.

A group of armed 'tribesmen' patrolled the canyon and its environs. Some Tribes had brought guns with them; others supplies of acid; a few nothing. Nobody cared. Everything was there for all to share—food, acid, weapons, men, women.

And still the Tribes gathered. They came from South, North, East.

At night, fires and writhing bodies littered the canyon floor. At the box-end, the music blared. Over the ridge, a group concentrated on recalling departed spirits. Across the canyon, in the other hills, another group played out the last rites of a witchcraft ceremony—and the orgy prepared to cut loose.

It happens. It has happened. It will happen again. The West has its spaces—wide-open spaces. The law can't be everywhere. The nearest police station could be a hundred miles away. A fire only shows for a few miles. Sound only travels a short distance before erasing itself in atmosphere.

The answer to the Tribe problem isn't going to be solved by trying to eliminate tribal gatherings nor raiding individual communities. The law must make peace with Hippiedom and re-establish relations. Hippiedom must review its own image and accept the fact that

laws do exist and that they, too, are subject to control. Until that happens—happenings will continue and the tribes will grow . . . and grow . . . and burst forth in an uprising.

The Mansons and Satans must be rooted out and leadership of the various cults left in the hands of less-cruel men. For the sake of the unborn children something must be done to protect them. Hardships and privations should not be their lot. Nor should society condone children being left in the care of those who would terribly initiate them into free-love and drug-addiction when still below the age of ten. Nobody wishes to dictate but neither can decent men and women overlook the cruel facts—hippiedom must conform if only to salvage the off-spring of free-love depravity.